

166

Donald Williams  
821 Brown St.  
Anchorage, AK 99501

December 30, 2005

Statewide Planning Office  
Division of Program Development  
DOT\_STIP@dot.state.ak.us

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for considering my comments on the Draft Fiscal Year 2006-08 STIP.

For a number of reasons, I am concerned with potential inclusion of the Knik Arm Bridge project as a priority within the STIP.

First, I understand that the bridge access routes into Anchorage will go through Government Hill and connect initially with the A-C couplet and then later also include a connection with Ingra Gambell Streets. I am concerned about the anticipated increased traffic congestion (from the bridge) through the access points into the City and City Center when there are already significant existing traffic problems in these areas. I propose first allocating monies for projects that would alleviate congestion along Ingra Gambell/ Seward Highway and 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues connecting to the Glenn Highway prior dumping additional traffic from a bridge into these problem areas.

Second, I am concerned about degrading the integrity of our downtown area by significantly increasing traffic into downtown on the A-C couplet. The increased congestion from the bridge traffic will make the downtown area less desirable for both tourism and local shoppers alike.

Third, in reviewing documents, I have yet to see a comprehensive traffic study of the impacts of the increased traffic congestion from the city bridge accesses on the neighborhoods and downtown area, as well on the ability for traffic to flow efficiently through the City. Before we embark on the Knik Arm Bridge Project we should study and understand the impacts of increased noise, congestion, air pollution, etc.

Finally, I am concerned about the costs and potential significant cost increases associated with the Bridge that may well burden our State for years to come. For example, we were assured that the Whittier Tunnel would largely pay for itself through tolls. This clearly has not occurred, yet we are now being told that tolls will also cover significant bridge costs. I highly doubt that the tolls will provide for a large percentage of the costs associated with construction and maintenance of the large project.

At this point, the state is flush with oil money and it looks like we can afford numerous large projects. However, as history has already shown us, this scenario can quickly

change. I fear that if we construct the Knik Bridge and we do have a financial downturn, we will be stuck with exorbitant bridge construction and maintenance costs at a time when we will be unable able to afford it.

In summary, I urge you to require adequate bridge impact studies, and serious purpose and needs assessment on all transportation priorities. At this juncture, I urge you to delete the Knik Arm Bridge in the next amendment to the 2006-08 STIP.

Sincerely,

Donald Williams